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ABSTRACT

A task force on private-public sector education in Virginia concluded that transfer and award of credit between public and private sector education providers should be facilitated. Based on the task force recommendations, the Virginia Council on Vocational Education made three recommendations to the State Board for Community Colleges and representative groups in the private sector and the military. The recommendations were as follows: (1) colleges in the Virginia Community College System should develop policies for evaluation and award of transfer credit from other postsecondary education institutions (including a process for transfer of credit from variously accredited private career schools, a process for transfer of credit from nonaccredited institutions, use of the American Council on Education's "Guide to the Evaluation of Military Experience") and should develop articulation agreements; (2) business, military, industry, and private career school providers should pursue accreditation and attempt to implement articulation agreements and to recognize transfer credits from the public sector; and (3) the Virginia Board of Education should review the recommendations of the task force and support the recommended actions. (The task force report is appended.) (KC)

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Transfer of Credit Between Public & Private Sector Postsecondary Education

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FOREWORD

Vocational-technical education is education and training that provides a student with knowledge of and practical experience in an occupational field. The program, in Virginia, is available in a variety of settings that have independent authority with differing purposes and responsibilities. Some of these in the public sector are school divisions, community colleges, correctional institutions, military services, and institutions serving individuals with various exceptionalities. Business, industry, private career schools, and community-based organizations are also heavily involved in providing education and training in a diverse array of occupations. Collectively, these service providers in the public and private sector comprise a delivery system for preparing individuals for entry and advancement in career fields that generally require less than a baccalaureate degree.

The Virginia Council on Vocational Education believes a goal of Virginia's public/private vocational-technical education delivery system should be the coordination of services at the maximum degree possible. Such coordination will benefit individuals, business, industry, and the economy.

COORDINATION OF VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA: TRANSFER OF CREDIT BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Coordination of vocational-technical education programs and services among agencies, institutions, military services, and the private sector is a worthy goal. It is an important part of the national initiative for vocational-technical education. Federal vocational legislation, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990, includes the following statement of purpose:

> *It is the purpose of this Act to make the United States more competitive in the world economy by developing more fully the academic and occupational skills of all segments of the population. This purpose will principally be achieved through concentrating resources on improving educational programs leading to academic and occupational skill competencies needed to work in a technologically advanced society.*

One of the Virginia Council on Vocational Education responsibilities is advising the state board of vocational education and reporting to the Governor, the business community, and the general public concerning policies the state should pursue to strengthen vocational education. The council, during the past several years, has made recommendations to strengthen, expand, and develop new coordination ventures. Included in these recommendations has been linking secondary vocational education with apprenticeship training, public school and community college coordination efforts through articulation agreements and "2 + 2" tech-prep programs, an adult training and retraining plan that represents a coordinated effort between public schools and community colleges, and improved communication between vocational education administrators and JTPA service delivery areas.

In 1988, the council made the following recommendation:

> *Transfer Of Credit For Private Sector Training*
>
> *The council believes it is time to maximize the educational resources in the state by incorporating the various occupational preparation sources into a fully articulated delivery system. Efforts have already begun to establish statewide vocational program articulation between the public secondary schools and community*

colleges. The next logical step is to expand this process to include private sector training sources. The private sources include private career schools, the military, and training provided by business and industry. Not all training in the private sector merits such consideration, but much of it does warrant transfer acceptability from public postsecondary institutions.

The council, therefore, recommends that a review be made of private sector training transfer policies in other states, and a committee with representation from appropriate agencies and organizations be established to explore the establishment of such a policy in Virginia.

The FY 1989 and FY 1990 state plan for vocational education established a task force to examine credit transfer policies in other states and to develop a plan to implement such a policy in Virginia.

A twenty-member private sector training task force was appointed with membership from community colleges, school divisions, universities, private career schools, Virginia Community College System, and the Department of Education. Old Dominion University conducted a study on private sector to public institution articulation for the task force. The study was guided by the following set of research questions:

Is articulation between private sector schools and public sector schools in Virginia feasible and useful?

What would be the advantages and disadvantages of an articulation agreement?

What articulation agreements are already in existence?

What methods could be used to evaluate the courses for the purpose of transferring credits?

Is accreditation necessary to accomplish articulation and if yes, what type?

What other options may be useful?

What are the economic implications of an articulation program?

What are the basic elements of statewide guidelines for articulation?

Conclusions from the study supported advantages of the transfer and award of credit between public and private sector education providers. Disadvantages were described as minimal.

Task force actions resulted in a report with ten recommendations directed to the Virginia Community College System, Virginia Department of Education and local education agencies, and private sector providers of postsecondary education and training. The task force report is included in the Appendix. The council believes the contents of the report outlines a workable plan for establishing a system for the transfer and award of credit between public and private sector postsecondary education providers in Virginia. The next step is for such a system to be adopted for implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The council has carefully reviewed the recommendations in the Report of the Private Sector Training Task Force. Recommendations in the report directed to the Virginia Community College System and the private sector, if implemented, will provide a system for transfer and award of credit between the public and private sector at the postsecondary level. This is a desirable outcome that will benefit the citizens of Virginia and establish new public/private sector linkages. The following recommendations are directed the the State Board for Community Colleges and representative groups in the private sector and the military.

1. The council recommends the State Board for Community Colleges, adopt the following recommendations from the Report of the Private Sector Training Task Force as a plan of action for establishing a system for the transfer and awarding of credit between community colleges and other postsecondary education providers in Virginia.

> *Individual colleges within the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) should be encouraged to develop policies and procedures for the evaluation and award of transfer credit from other postsecondary education segments, which specify:*
>
> • *a process for transfer of credit from Private Career Schools that are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC);*
>
> • *a process for transfer of credit from Private Career Schools that are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges-Commission on Occupational Education Institutions (SACS-COEI);*

• a process for transfer of credit from Private Career Schools accredited by other Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA)-recognized accrediting agencies, such as the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools (AICS) and the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools (NATTS);

• a process for transfer of credit from institutions not accredited by a COPA-recognized accrediting agency.

Individual VCCS colleges are encouraged to use the American Council on Education (ACE) Guide to the Evaluation of Military Experience and credit recommendations contained therein, for the evaluation and award of credits for training and job experience in the military services.

Individual VCCS colleges are encouraged to use the ACE National Guide for the evaluation and award of credit based on training and experience in business, industry, government agencies, and other noncollegiate sponsored instruction.

To reflect the aforementioned recommendations, the Virginia Community College System should consider reviewing and updating Section 5.7.5.1 (Advanced Standing and Waiver of Credits) of the VCCS Policy Manual.

In addition to the above, individual colleges within the VCCS should be encouraged to develop articulation agreements, when appropriate, with the private sector within individual service regions.

2. The council recommends that business, industry, military, and private career school training providers adopt the following recommendations from the Report of the Private Sector Training Task Force as means to support the transfer and award of credit to the public sector; and accommodate transfer credits from the public sector.

Private career schools are encouraged to pursue accreditation by an appropriate accrediting agency as a means to further the transfer and award of credit to the public sector.

All segments of the private sector (business, industry, military, private career schools) are encouraged to implement articulation agreements with public sector education institutions.

Private sector training agencies and institutions are encouraged to recognize and accommodate transfer credits from the public sector.

The council believes the recommendations in the report directed to the Virginia Department of Education and local education agencies need careful review. The issue of local education agencies evaluating and awarding credit transferred from the private sector to adult occupational education programs raises several questions. Is any form of credit awarded in school divisions for adult occupational education other than a certificate of completion? Is the recommendation directed to credit for graduation from high school in a night school setting? Is there some other outcome suggested? The recommendation supporting articulation agreements seems to support the ongoing vocational-technical articulation agreement initiative between school divisions and community colleges with the addition of the private sector. These articulation agreements recognize student competency levels rather than awarding credit. The council fully supports the further development of these agreements and the establishment of additional structured "2 + 2" tech-prep programs. It appears that recommendations directed to the Virginia Department of Education and local education agencies have limited utility in the larger context of transfer of credit between public and private sector postsecondary education providers.

3. The council recommends the Virginia Board of Education review the recommendations in the Report of the Private Sector Training Task Force and support those actions that will accomplish the award and transfer of credit between postsecondary education providers in the public and private sector.

APPENDIX

REPORT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TRAINING TASK FORCE:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSFER AND AWARD OF CREDIT BETWEEN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SEGMENTS IN VIRGINIA

Introduction

Postsecondary education in Virginia must recognize and accommodate a diverse student population. Postsecondary institutions within Virginia are also diverse, with public and private segments and various levels of institutions within segments. A common characteristic shared by many of today's students is mobility. Student mobility may mean movement from an institution in one geographic location to another, movement from one level within a segment to another, and movement from one postsecondary education segment to another.

A rapidly changing technological society has imposed a need for continual retraining of its citizens. Retraining may take many forms and may be accomplished in a variety of educational settings. Most postsecondary institutions lend support to the notion and philosophy of "life-long learning" in meeting this societal need. If life-long learning is to be a real precept of contemporary society, then the ease and equity with which students move between and among postsecondary segments and levels should be a real concern.

In order to improve student mobility in the Commonwealth, the Private Sector Training Task Force acknowledges the need for improved policies, guidelines, and procedures for transfer and award of academic credit between the public community college segment and the private career school segment (and vice versa). The Task Force has drawn upon The Joint Policy Statement of Transfer and Award of Academic Credit by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) for guidance in this process.

The Private Sector Training Task Force has involved representatives from various educational segments in a dialogue of issues and concerns relating to the evaluation, award, and transfer of credit between private and public postsecondary segments. The Task Force also sought and obtained external expertise relating to transfer issues and concerns,

most notably, the issue of accreditation. Within this context, the Private Sector Training Task Force offers ten recommendations for consideration, and endorsement, by the public and private sector agencies/ institutions described in this report.

Recommendations to the Virginia Community College System

1. Individual colleges within the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) should be encouraged to develop policies and procedures for the evaluation and award of transfer credit from other postsecondary education segments, which specify:

a. a process for transfer of credit from Private Career Schools that are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC);

b. a process for transfer of credit from Private Career Schools that are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges-Commission on Occupational Education Institutions (SACS-COEI);

c. a process for transfer of credit from Private Career Schools accredited by other Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA)-recognized accrediting agencies, such as the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools (AICS) and the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools (NATTS);

d. a process for transfer of credit from institutions not accredited by a COPA-recognized accrediting agency.

2. Individual VCCS colleges are encouraged to use the American Council on Education (ACE) Guide to the Evaluation of Military Experience and credit recommendations contained therein, for the evaluation and award of credits for training and job experience in the military services.

3. Individual VCCS colleges are encouraged to use the ACE National Guide for the evaluation and award of credit based on training and experience in business, industry, government agencies, and other non-collegiate sponsored instruction.

4. To reflect the aforementioned recommendations, the Virginia Community College System should consider reviewing and updating Section 5. 7. 5. 1 (Advanced Standing and Waiver of Credits) of the VCCS Policy Manual.

5. In addition to the above, individual colleges within the VCCS should be encouraged to develop articulation agreements, when appropriate, with the private sector within individual service regions.

Recommendations to the Virginia Department of Education and to Local Education Agencies

6. The Department of Education should encourage local education agencies to evaluate and award credit transferred from the private sector to adult occupational education programs based upon the aforementioned guidelines.

7. Local education agencies should be encouraged to establish articulation agreements with the public and private education sectors regarding secondary/postsecondary credit evaluation and award of transfer credit.

Recommendations to the Private Sector

8. Private career schools are encouraged to pursue accreditation by an appropriate accrediting agency as a means to further the transfer and award of credit to the public sector.

9. All segments of the private sector (business, industry, military, private career schools) are encouraged to implement articulation agreements with public sector education institutions.

10. Private sector training agencies and institutions are encouraged to recognize and accommodate transfer credits from the public sector.

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